

REMARKS

Independent claims 1 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yamada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,067,141). In response, Applicants amended claims 1 and 9 to define the singular point of the director of the liquid crystal as being formed in the predetermined position “above or below the portion,” and respectfully traverse.

Yamada discloses in FIGs. 3A and 3B column structures 51 that control the orientation directions of the liquid crystal molecules. In particular, the liquid crystal molecules are controlled by the structures 51 so that they tend to orient in parallel with the substrates 50 and 60. Moreover, since the column structures 51 are formed to be at least partially in contact with the upper and lower substrates 50 and 60, they can be arranged to control the size and position of liquid crystal domains (see column 12, lns. 47-62). However, Yamada does not disclose (or suggest) a singular point control structure for performing control such that a singular point of a director of the liquid crystals is formed at a predetermined position above or below the portion, as now recited in amended claims 1 and 9. Rather, liquid crystals are positioned around the column structures 51, as illustrated in FIGs. 3A-3C of Yamada.

In contrast, claims 1 and 9 are amended to recite a singular point control portion for performing control such that a singular point of a director of the liquid crystals is formed in a predetermined position above or below the portion. The Examiner considers the reference point 8c in FIG. 3C to be a singular point of the singular point control portions 51.

However, the reference point 8c is not above or below any of the column structures 51, which the Examiner considers as the singular point control portion.

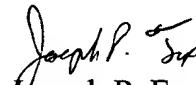
Furthermore, there is no description in Yamada directed to the singular point of the director of the liquid crystals, and therefore no disclosure or suggestion of the present invention. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 9, and their associated dependent claims 2-8 and 10-12, is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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